

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH WITH ADMIRAL GARY ROUGHEAD, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, VIA TELECONFERENCE SUBJECT: COOPERATIVE MARITIME STRATEGY TIME: 12:15 P.M. EDT DATE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007

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ADM. ROUGHEAD: Good afternoon. Thanks for joining today.

CHARLES "JACK" HOLT (chief, New Media Operations, OASD PA): All right, Admiral. Thank you very much. I'm Jack Holt with the Bloggers Roundtable. Thank you for joining us. And if you would, sir, your opening statement.

ADM. ROUGHEAD: Well, I'd just like to thank you for your interest in our maritime strategy. As you know, in cooperation with my colleagues in the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps, Admiral Thad Allen and Admiral -- or, General Jim Conway, we unveiled our maritime strategy that we're calling a "Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower." We did it here at the largest collection of maritime leaders that, based on our record checks, it's the largest ever in history. We had 98 countries represented, 90 leaders of navies or coast guards.

And we shared with them our view on our strategy, how we got there which, I think in itself was unique, with having had conversations with the country leaders and academia, civil leaders, and also business leaders. And in that process, we found that the American people want our maritime forces to remain strong to protect them and their homeland, and then a significant desire for us to work with partners around the world. And that's a theme that continued to echo as we held our conversation and worked and discussed our way ahead with some of the strategic thinkers.

We also state in the strategy, state very clearly that it is equally important to prevent wars as it is to win wars, and to make the decisions on that which contributes to both and, in the case of the United States' maritime services, making the resource decisions that allow us to do that.

We define some strategic imperatives, things that we must do to fulfill the strategy. One is to concentrate our power, our credible combat power in areas of the world where we have historic and current interests. And even though we may be out and about globally, and we are more so today than I think we have in recent decades, but to still concentrate that power in the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions, because we believe that that's where our interests are most connected.

But as I said, it doesn't mean that we neglect other areas. The other imperative is to be able to take our forces that are globally distributed, be able to operate them in a flexible enough way where we can bring them together

or break them apart in very mission-defined configurations that allow us to contribute to our homeland defense in depth, working cooperatively with other partners at distance from our homeland, but then also having a much closer relationship with the Coast Guard closer to our shores.

And then by having these forces distributed globally, we are able to deepen and foster relationships with friends and international partners and our allies, and then use those relationships and our forces to prevent and contain local disruptions.

To realize those imperatives, we identified our core capabilities. They remain, as they have for quite some time, forward presence, using that forward presence and other tools that we have -- our sea-based strategic assets, our space-based assets -- to be able to be the deterrent force for the country and what the country needs. To be able to use those force for sea control or the ability to control areas of the ocean and seas to realize the objectives that we, or in collaboration with partners, may need to do.

And then also retaining our ability to project power, even when access may be denied. And that is not only power projection of our Navy, but also a power projection that is unique to the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps teams.

But the strategy also calls out for two more other capabilities that we've called the expanded core capabilities, one of which is maritime security, and the other is humanitarian assistance and disaster response. I think there's no question that globally the need for enhanced maritime security is more acute today than perhaps ever before, because of the amount of commerce that's moving on the oceans, the resources that are moving on the oceans, but also the way that business requires no disruption in the flow of that commerce, with the tighter production schemes that are in use today.

So looking at that increasing maritime domain awareness -- in other words, a better understanding of what's moving on, above, and under the seas; being able to share information so that we do have a better understanding.

And then, as we have seen -- and it's not just limited to that which has happened overseas, but the ability to respond as effectively and efficiently as we can to natural disasters. I know for me, having been out in the Pacific, the tsunami was something that had a great effect on me professionally and personally. But it was shortly followed by Hurricane Katrina, and we realized that those types of disasters are -- that we're not immune to those. So using our forces to be able to work more proactively, not just with other maritime forces, but also other militaries and non-governmental organizations and what have you. So, you know, that is kind of the basis of it.

Now, as we get into the more cooperative arrangements, it's clear that those are going to be based on trust, and trust is not something that you turn a switch on and off or that you surge when you need it. Trust is something that is built over time and must be in place as you take on the challenges of the future. And key to that are the relationships that exist among the people and especially among the men and women of maritime services.

So that's where we are with the strategy. It is not a document that we will, you know, print and have a glossy and just leave it on a coffee table someplace. We intend to continue to have the discussions and the dialogue. We intend to make the investments that enhance our ability and capability in those

core capabilities, the four traditional ones that I've talked about, and then the two expanded core capabilities as well.

And so with that, I'll turn it over to you for any questions you may have.

MR. HOLT: Thank you very much, sir.

Mike Goldfarb, you were first on line, so why don't you get us started?  
Q Thanks for doing this, sir. This is Mike Goldfarb from The Weekly Standard. I sort of have two questions; hopefully, you can answer both for me.

The first is sort of what's your time line for getting to the 313-ship Navy that you all set as a target? You know, with all the contracting and shipbuilding problems you've been having lately, I'm wondering what your sense of the time line is for getting to that number.

And the second question I have is there's been a lot of talk recently about, you know, the balance of power in the Pacific, and there was a recent op-ed in the Times talking about how the Pacific is not going to be an American lake anymore. And I sort of would just like to get your sense of how things are trending for U.S. naval power in the Pacific.

ADM. ROUGHEAD: Yeah. The -- with regard to the 313-ship shipbuilding plan, I consider that to be the floor, because of my experiences as fleet commander on both Atlantic and Pacific, knowing what the demands are out there, I think 313 is the minimum number. But I do like the balance that we have.

You know, the objective was to get to 313 by 2020.

As you well know, our littoral combat ship program has been slowed down a little bit, but I'm very committed to that program, very committed to the capability that we need that the LCS will give us. So, you know, I'd say within a couple of years of that is the target that I continue -- will continue to pursue.

With regard to the Pacific, a place that I've had the opportunity to serve in perhaps more than others over the last decade and a half, I know, you know, what -- (word inaudible) -- may say about it, but I would say in the last two years we have had more naval activity; we have had increased participation by navies in that region with the United States -- (inaudible/tone on line) -- than I have seen before.

I believe the conference, or the symposium, that we're here today in Newport with is indicative of the interest that navies around the world, not just in the Pacific, have with us.

The other activities in maritime security and humanitarian assistance that have been undertaken by our Navy and Marine Corps and Coast Guard in the Pacific I would say that even though some of the force postures may be changing out there, the interest in and the level of activity of working with the United States Navy has actually increased over the last couple of years.

MR. HOLT: Thank you, sir. And Griff.

Q Thanks, Admiral, for taking time. Griff Jenkins with FOX News.

You spoke of challenges of the future, and yesterday in a press conference, President Bush spoke of -- actually invoked the term "World War III" in avoiding a conflict with a nuclear Iran. So my question, to the extent you can comment on it, is how is the Navy planning to contend with the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons? And if you could add any clarity to possibly what the president was talking about.

ADM. ROUGHHEAD: Well, I -- you know, I would say that the diplomatic efforts that are ongoing with regard to Iran are -- is the path that we must be on. As far as our Navy is concerned, our Navy is globally deployed. It is -- well trained, well prepared, well equipped, and my responsibilities are to be able to ensure that the Navy remains that way to be used in ways that the commander-in-chief dictates.

Q Thank you.

MR. HOLT: All right, sir. And Ward Carroll.

Q Hi, CNO. Ward Carroll from Military.com.

The phrase "mission-tailored maritime forces" kind of jumps out at me here in one sense in particular, from the brochure that was forwarded to us. "This global distribution must extend beyond -- (inaudible/tone on line) -- deployment areas and reflect missions ranging from humanitarian operations to an increased emphasis on counterterrorism and irregular warfare."

So when we talk about traditional deployment areas, are we talking about carrier strike groups going to, you know, the (IAO ?) or the Gulf or normal things there? And if so, do we need to change the Navy goals in the FYDP and end-strength targets from what they are now? If the answer is yes, can you give us some examples of how, say, the Joint Strike Fighter buy is going to be modified or -- we've already talked about the bottom of your shipbuilding requirements, but how about V-22s or whatever else we would need to effect this new direction?

ADM. ROUGHHEAD: The -- with regard to the specific programs, the, you know, as I said, I think we have a very good, balanced shipbuilding program. Some of the issues that we're dealing with today, I would submit, are -- one of the factors is that we are introducing several new -- not just new classes, but new concepts. The littoral combat ship is new. LPG-17 is new; there's a new class of aircraft carrier. We've just taken delivery of some of our new Virginia class submarines. So we're at a period where we're making some significant changes in capability, and then -- and operating concepts.

Our aviation plan is -- has been stable the last couple of years, and I believe that the -- (inaudible) -- that we are buying are relevant to our future. I would also say that we have also begun to approach our expeditionary capabilities much more thoughtfully, and it's in some of those areas that I think will give us some of the mission packages that are relevant to the types of operations that we'll do, particularly with regard to counterterrorism and then some of the maritime security activities that will allow those forces to synchronize and operate in a much more cooperative way with some of our partners than perhaps in the past.

Q One more question -- (inaudible) -- do you have any concerns about op tempo, and do you see the Navy getting bigger or smaller, manpower-wise, to align with this strategy?

ADM. ROUGHHEAD: I see the objectives that we have, Ward, of coming down to 322 to still be valid. We are -- as you know, we have been operating the forces in such a way to take advantage of -- you know, I don't want to throw in too much of a jargon term, but the fleet response plan. I was present when we began to create it at Second Fleet, and then -- but it has given us greater flexibility, and if you look at our deployment patterns, only on a couple of occasions have we exceeded our objective of six months.

In fact, we have introduced some new controls on -- what we're calling "home tempo." And then the old term was "turnaround ratio;" we now call it "dwell." And we have been able to live within those, with the exception of a couple of unique deployments, and also with the exception of some of our high-demand, low-density forces that I continue to watch very carefully, specifically our SEALs, our explosive ordnance disposal, and then some of our medical people.

We're making some adjustments in how we resource that readiness, and then how we monitor and control their deployment frequencies and lengths.

Q Thanks, CNO.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Jason Sigger.

Q Morning, sir. My name's Jason Sigger. I work with the Armchair Generalist blog. I work typically in the WMD issues, and sometimes it's a little difficult to know what part of the Navy to talk to about counterproliferation issues. But there are certainly some outstanding Navy officers that are working at STRATCOM and Joint Staff and OSD on this issue.

My question is specifically to the -- I guess to the maritime interdiction role of the Navy, supporting the proliferation security initiative. I'm wondering if you're seeing progress in integrating the maritime interdiction role into the combating WMD strategy overall, and what other roles do you think the Navy is playing as a lead agent in the combating WMD issue?

ADM. ROUGHHEAD: Right. I think the -- you know, you touched on -- our ability as a navy and naval force to be able to conduct maritime interdiction is key to counterproliferation.

As you may know, we have developed our forces; we are exploring enhancing our capabilities with regard to our level of capability for interdiction.

I also believe that in the area of maritime security.

And to kind of go back to that maritime domain awareness, that that is absolutely a key area to pursue, because it's great to have the capability to jump on a ship, but you have to be able to know where that ship is. And how we can gain a better understanding of that -- what's moving, that which is showing anomalies in behavior, and then having the exact locations of that is very, very key.

So not only do we have to have the capability to conduct the interdiction operations, the foundation for it and that which can lead to the most efficient and effective mission accomplishment has to start with maritime domain awareness, and there are a lot of activities and investments moving into that area.

Q Thank you, sir.

OPERATOR: Okay, we have time for one more question, please.

MR. HOLT: Okay.

Q Jack, Andrew. I got on.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Andrew, go ahead.

Q Good. Admiral, Andrew Lubin from U.S. Cavalry ON Point. Sir, look at the (rum lines ?) of 17 October, under "Security, Stability and Seapower," refers to "90 percent of the commerce sails across the waterways. Any distribution (sic) in the global system caused by instability has a direct impact on American quality of life." This strikes me as a coined version of Alfred Thayer Mahan's doctrine. Are you looking at -- to extend that, are you looking at interdicting pirates off of Yemen and use -- (word inaudible) -- to interdict pirates off of Indonesia, or how far do you take this?

ADM. ROUGHEAD: Well, I think a lot of that is not just those types of disruptions. I mean, we saw in the Straits of Malacca a couple of years ago, when Lloyds threw the -- and I can't recall the exact term. There was a wartime premium on trade going through the Straits of Malacca. I can guarantee you that that was not absorbed by shipping companies or by the companies producing the equipment. It was absorbed by those that were taking it off the shelves and paying for it. So, I mean, that's one aspect of it, to be able to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others. Now, I've said this several times: I have no desire to patrol or to conduct operations in the Straits of Malacca. But to go back to what I was talking about before with this idea of maritime domain awareness and the ability to support others who are involved in that, I think that's a cooperative effort that clearly is in our best interests.

But even -- on the other side of the coin, and something that can be even more disruptive is the disruption to major maritime hubs where so much of the exchange takes place, particularly in the containerized world. Being able to work with friends, partners, other agencies, work closely with our Coast Guard I think is in the best interest of our security and our prosperity, not only in this country, but in other countries. And as our conversations with the country bore out time and time again, the belief that the American people have that our security and prosperity is linked to the security and prosperity of other countries, I think, is the reason why the maritime domain becomes so important.

Q Great. Thank you.

MR. HOLT: Okay. Thank you, sir. Admiral Gary Roughead, chief of Naval Operations, with us for the Bloggers Roundtable today. Thank you so much for being with us, sir, and taking the time to speak with us. Do you have any closing comments?

ADM. ROUGHEAD: (Inaudible) -- my pleasure, and I appreciate your interest in our maritime strategy and in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Thanks for taking the time to do this.

MR. HOLT: All right. Thank you, sir. And hopefully we can speak to you again.

ADM. ROUGHEAD: I hope so.

MR. HOLT: Thank you very much.

ADM. ROUGHEAD: (Inaudible) -- a great day.

END.